



REMARKS

I. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 3 and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,990,823 to LeMoullac. Claims 2 and 7 - 9 have been cancelled. Claims 3 and 7 now depend upon amended claim 1, which is believed to be allowable. As such, claims 3 and 7 are now patentably distinct over LeMoullac.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 2 and 4-6 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Claim 1 now includes the claim limitations of original claim 2, now cancelled. Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form. As such, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 1 and 3-7 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In response to the Office Action dated March 31, 2004, claims 1 and 4 have been amended pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121. It is believed these amendments have placed the amended claims in conformance with the requirements of the Office Action. At this point, applicants believe that the claims remaining in the case distinguish over the art cited and comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §102, §103 and §112. As such, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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